

THE COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

PRESIDENT'S

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE

Year 1888-1889.

WASHINGTON:

GIBSON BROS., PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS.

1889.

Under the rules of the corporation it is made the duty of the President, in submitting his annual report on the operations of the University, to accompany that report "with such recommendations and suggestions as shall seem to him appropriate."

The critical stage which the University has reached at the present juncture in its history seems to call at once for retrospection and circumspection.

On my accession to the Presidency of the Columbian University (then the Columbian College), in 1871, I found it without any endowment, without any vested funds save the "Davis Prize Fund" of \$500, and the treasury was burdened by a debt of more than \$30,000. The University, however, had a large unproductive real estate. In a report made to the corporation on 9th of October, 1872, acting on a hint received from Mr. Corcoran, I recommended that measures should be immediately initiated for raising a "Permanent Endowment Fund" of \$250,000. Messrs. Corcoran, F. Wilson, and Woods were appointed a committee to concert measures to this end. The steps thus taken resulted, through many windings and hindrances, in the establishment of the Corcoran Endowment Fund, which constitutes the first working endowment which the University has ever had.

In a report made to the Board of Trustees on the 18th of December, 1872, and therefore after Mr. Corcoran had made to us his pledge of the "Trinidad" property, I submitted some observations on the "Washington Educational Outlook." These observations were printed by order of the Trustees that they might be communicated to the Overseers in advance of a joint meeting to be held by the corporation for the purpose of "discussing these recommendations and suggestions." The suggestions ran as follows:

"With unrivalled educational advantages, afforded to us free of cost by the felicity of our position at this national centre, we are compelled to forego them all for the want of a Faculty to utilize them. And while thus failing to rise to the height of our privileges, we are daily incurring the risk of losing the vantage ground we now occupy, for if *we* do not soon avail ourselves of these rare advantages, it cannot be doubted that others

will be raised up to fulfil the mission in which we shall have failed through our own default.

"Considered with reference to the public wants in the matter of liberal learning, there is room in the city of Washington only for a *great University*. A small College is not needed here, for the work of a 'small College' can be more cheaply done by similar institutions in Maryland and Virginia. As a rival of 'small Colleges' in the adjoining States, the Columbian College must soon 'go to the wall;' for it has less territory than they from which to recruit its pupils. But as a rival of *great seats of learning*, drawing patronage from near and from afar, like those at Cambridge, New Haven, Princeton, and Charlottesville, there is a magnificent field open to it for successful competition and for perennial usefulness. Until our College shall be placed on *this* broad and elevated basis, it must miss 'the prize of its high calling.' And to reach this broad and elevated basis we *must* have an endowment somewhat approaching that of the great Colleges and Universities, among which we should aim to take rank if we wish to preserve our 'right to be.' With a free endowment, yielding an annual income of \$30,000 or \$40,000, we could successfully essay the experiment of establishing the beginning of a great University, and, with such a beginning, new departments of instruction would crystallize around the educational centres already created, until, in the end, the people of the United States might come to point with as much pride to the Columbian University as the people of Germany point to the University of Berlin, as the highest seat of learning in the land. Any aspiration lower than this tends to defeat our manifest destiny, if not to imperil our existence.

"The expediency of selling the large and valuable tract of land now occupied by the College—of purchasing a new seat within the city, and of investing the remainder of the proceeds as a permanent endowment, has been recently mooted among some friends of the College in Baltimore, and is eminently worthy of your consideration, from the better judgment you can form in the premises, owing to your local knowledge of matters affecting the financial interests of the institution. If we ever rise to the dignity of a great University we must have a Scientific School, and the Professors in that School will use the cabinets and even the rooms of the Smithsonian Building for purposes of instruction. This privilege has been already secured."

In the annual report made by the Board of Trustees to the corporation under date of June 24, 1876, the following language was held:

"No increase of students can be expected in the College until there shall have been an enlargement of the Faculty and of its courses of instruction. On the contrary, we may justly and naturally look for a constantly increasing diminution of the number of the matriculates unless steps be taken to amplify and improve the educational facilities of the in-

stitution. * * * While we wait, the Johns Hopkins University is entering the field."

What was prediction in 1876 is history in 1889. The Johns Hopkins University is already utilizing, to some extent, the educational opportunities of Washington. The new Catholic University has been laying its foundations, while we have done absolutely nothing for the replenishment of the College Faculty or for the development of the University in any branch of the highest learning.

I adhere in 1889 only the more emphatically to the opinion expressed in 1872, that it is only as a rival of "great seats of learning" that the Columbian University can ever realize the height of its mission. We were not without our hopes at one time that Mr. Corcoran might endow such a great institution on the basis of the Columbian University. If those hopes were not fully realized, we have none the less to confess our lasting gratitude to the princely benefactor who gave to us our Medical Building, the Trinidad property, \$30,000 towards the erection of our present University edifice, and who signalized his interest in the University by adding \$25,000 to the Corcoran Endowment on almost the last occasion when he was well enough to attend the sessions of the corporation. At a time when the University had little more than "a name to live," he breathed into its frame the breath of a new life.

The Columbian College, like all the great historic seats of learning in the country, was founded by a Christian denomination. As the Congregationalists founded Harvard and Yale, as the Presbyterians founded Princeton, as the Methodists founded the Wesleyan University at Middletown, Conn., and the Episcopalians founded Trinity College in Hartford, of the same State, so the Baptists founded the Columbian College in 1821 with the distinct and avowed intention that it should be not only a glory to their denomination, but also a glory to the Nation. They builded wisely, and in laying their foundations at Washington they "builded better than they knew." In the financial disasters which overtook the College soon after its establishment, and amid the straitened resources which have attended it in subsequent years, we can now see that it was only in a city like Washington that the College could have sustained itself under so many strokes of adverse fortune. The present num-

ber of its pupils, when we consider the paucity of the population which forms its local constituency, bears a striking tribute to the large percentage of the Washington public which is anxious to secure a collegiate education of some sort. And when to this percentage of our College students we add the large percentage which is pursuing advanced studies in the other departments of the University, we can easily perceive that the present prosperity of the institution is mainly due to the felicity of its position.

The spirit of education has recently brooded anew over the bosom of the Baptist denomination in the United States. An Education Society has been formed. Under the auspices of this Society nearly a million of dollars has already been raised for the purpose of founding a new seat of learning in Chicago and of fostering feeble institutions in the several States. A Committee of the Board of Management of this Society, after minutely inquiring into the surroundings of the University problem in Washington, has unanimously recommended that our University should be succored. [Details reserved for confidential communication.] And the men who make this recommendation are representative men, and men of mark in the Society. The Committee consists of Dr. J. M. Ellis, of Baltimore; Dr. George Dana Boardman, of Philadelphia; Dr. H. L. Morehouse, of New York; Prof. W. R. Harper, of Yale University, and Dr. A. C. Osborn, of Albion, N. Y.

The report of this Committee comes up for consideration at a special meeting of the Board of Management to be held in the city of New York in the month of October next.

It is known to most of you that I published a communication on the advantages and facilities of Washington as an educational centre in *The Examiner* of New York city, in the month of March last. That communication, with some additions, was subsequently printed in pamphlet form for the use of the Committee appointed to consider the Columbian University in its relation to national education, and copies have been distributed in other quarters. I append only a few of the many responses which this exposition has elicited.

From Prof. E. H. Johnson, D.D., of Crozer Theological Seminary.

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

CHESTER, PA., March 20, 1889.

Pres. J. C. WELLING, LL.D.

MY DEAR SIR: I have read your article in *The Examiner* with the liveliest satisfaction that the cause it represents has been adequately advocated at just the right time. If your appeal does not secure the response it calls for the result will be more and worse than a tragedy—it will be a farce!

As a friend of education, and especially of education under religious auspices, I beg leave to offer you thanks and congratulations for the most impressive advocacy of an educational project that has fallen under my notice. One would say that your appeal cannot fail.

Yours very truly,

E. H. JOHNSON.

From the Principal of the State Normal School of Rhode Island.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,

PROVIDENCE, March 21, 1889.

MY DEAR DR. WELLING: I have just finished reading your admirable article in *The Examiner*, and have been profoundly impressed with the significance of the facts therein set forth. I hope the matter will receive from the denomination the attention which it deserves. I hope that steps will be taken to bring it to the personal attention of the officers of the Educational Society, and if practicable, to secure a consideration of it at the annual meeting of the Society in Boston.

Yours very sincerely,

THOMAS J. MORGAN.

From the Rev. Geo. D. Boardman, D. D., LL.D.

PHILADELPHIA, March 21, 1889.

MY DEAR PRESIDENT WELLING: I was deeply impressed by your letter in *The Examiner* of this week. * * *

I write by this mail to Dr. Ellis, of Baltimore, suggesting to him that he call an early meeting of his special committee.

The possibility is, indeed, majestic, and the little that I can do to help matters is gladly placed at your disposal.

Devoutly grateful that Providence has placed you in your commanding position, and praying you to accept the assurance of my personal regard, I remain, faithfully yours,

GEO. D. BOARDMAN.

From the Secretary of the Am. Baptist Home Mission Society.

NEW YORK, March 22, 1889.

Pres. JAMES C. WELLING,

Washington D. C.

DEAR BRO.: Yours of the 25th is at hand. Of course I read your admirable article in *The Examiner*. It is a cogent presentation of the arguments

in favor of a great university at Washington. I hope that we may live not only to see such a university established, but to see it a potent influence in our educational affairs. I shall be glad, as I may be able, to use my influence in bringing about this result. I believe that discussion is necessary, and that if it is only kept prominently before the denomination some man, or men, will rise up and say, we are prepared to give the money that may be necessary to establish the institution on a liberal basis.

In any event, you have thus far done your duty. The seed has been widely sown through the columns of *The Examiner*; the harvest may be expected in due time; but, like the husbandman, we may have to wait patiently for the harvest. May you be permitted, as president of the institution to eat of the first fruits.

Yours very truly,

H. L. MOREHOUSE,
Cor. Secy.

From Prof. Noah K. Davis, LL.D., of the University of Va.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,
VIRGINIA, *March 23, 1889.*

President JAMES C. WELLING, LL.D.

MY DEAR SIR: On reading your very able and demonstrative article in the *N. Y. Examiner* of this week, I feel moved to write you a little note expressing my heartfelt sympathy with your arduous labors and your grand projects. They are not new to me, but just now I am inspired with more hope of your complete and brilliant success than ever heretofore. I devoutly pray that at least five millions may be soon donated to Columbian University, which, I believe, would be the best possible investment of that sum for the benefit of posterity and the cause of scientific and religious truth. There has never been any question in my mind as to the place or the nucleus of a great Baptist University, and how there could be any in anybody's mind after your article I am unable to see. Moreover, the *time* has come—NOW or NEVER.

With all good wishes for your speedy and complete success in this magnificent project, and for your personal welfare, I am, my dear sir, yours very sincerely,

NOAH K. DAVIS.

From a Member of our Board of Overseers.

BALTIMORE, *March 26, 1889.*

Prof. WELLING.

MY DEAR BROTHER: *The Examiner* you were so kind to send me received. Have read your article with thrilling interest. All friends of the University will thank you for it. I hope it may arouse our people to the importance of improving their opportunity.

The great mass of the people are ignorant of the facts you have given.

As you have gained the consent of your mind to come to the front on this subject, let me beg you to stay there.

With best wishes for yourself, personally, and for the University, I am,
Yours sincerely,

JNO. W. M. WILLIAMS.

From Dr. Edward Bright, Editor of the N. Y. Examiner.

NEW YORK, March 27, 1889.

MY DEAR DR. WELLING: The more I think of your article in *The Examiner* of last week, and the reception that it is having, the deeper is the conviction that you will have to take it upon yourself, personally, to see about obtaining the first million. Nobody can do it half as well as you can do it, and it never can be done in any other way than by a face-to-face application to the men that can give large sums. It strikes me that the first thing to do is to make out a list of the men, and then for you to go to work and make it the crowning success of your life to have the Columbian University sure of the position and career that you have pleaded for with so much force. If you will make out the names of such men as occur to you I will suggest others if the right names occur to me. It seems to me to be of the utmost importance that we should have your University in the way of being all that you desire before the Catholics get their university on its feet.

Excuse these suggestions, and believe me to be very truly and hopefully yours,

EDWARD BRIGHT.

From a Member of our Board of Overseers.

BALTIMORE, March 28, 1889.

MY DEAR BROTHER: As one of the Overseers of the Columbian University, I desire to thank you for your letter in *The Examiner* of May 21st. You have done well, I think, in your striking way, to call attention at this time to the claims of the University on our denomination, and, in this connection, to the very great advantages of Washington city as an educational centre. Surely, neither has been sufficiently appreciated, and, in writing as you have done, you place the responsibility of the hour upon the shoulders of our Christian people, where it properly belongs. I thank you, and, for one, I am in hearty sympathy with your National Baptist University plan, and do hope that our denomination will now see face to face, and will not be slow, as a people, to improve the rare opportunity that has come up now for high and wide-spread Christian education.

Yours very truly,

JAMES POLLARD.

From a Member of our Board of Overseers.

BALTIMORE, March 30, 1889.

DEAR DR. WELLING: I have been greatly impressed with the extraordinary advantages which Washington offers as a site for a university of the largest, broadest character.

The array of facts touching the Columbian University, as to its history, present surroundings, and possible future, if properly endowed, which you presented so lucidly--indeed vividly--in *The Examiner* of last week, are so overwhelming to my mind that I fear even you would regard me as an enthusiast whose expressions must be discounted.

I favor the founding of academies and colleges at central points all over our country, but that need not prevent our large-hearted, intelligent, liberal givers from uniting, in offering to the Baptist denomination of the United States the finest opportunity for the broadest culture ever presented.

Give me spiritual discernment first, of course, but let it not stop there, for in this age there must be an insight into men and things, which can only be obtained from such an institution as Columbian University should be. I dare not pray for wealth, but if I had it my acts would but confirm my words. God bless you and your work.

Sincerely,

GEO. O. MANNING.

From the Rev. A. C. Osborn, D.D., of Albion, N. Y.

ALBION, ORLEANS CO., N. Y., April 1, 1889.

MY DEAR BROTHER: Permit me first of all to thank you again and again for the remarkably full and impressive article in a late number of *The Examiner*. I read it and the editorial comments with the greatest satisfaction. It can but give a marked impulse to the work we have so much upon our thoughts and our hearts. * * *

Yours most truly,

A. C. OSBORN.

From the Librarian of Brown University.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., April 1, 1889.

JAS. C. WELLING, LL. D.,

Pres. Columbian Univ.

DEAR SIR: I have read your article in *The Examiner* of the 21st with great pleasure. The arguments are unanswerable, and the facts are stated very clearly and with conciseness. I have laid it away for future reference. Meeting Gen. Morgan a few moments ago, he wished me to *write* to you what I *stated* to him on the subject. Excuse the liberty which I, as a stranger, take in so doing. I sincerely hope the great Baptist denomination may show themselves to be as wise as the Roman Catholics in this matter, and liberally endow Columbian University.

Yours very sincerely,

REUBEN A. GUILD,
Librarian, etc.

From a Member of our Board of Trustees.

WASHINGTON, April 6, 1889.

DEAR DOCTOR WELLING: Thanks for the privilege of reading your article in *The Examiner*. You are right in your views and conclusions.

With the money we could before very long have the best University in our country. I should be proud to be connected with such a university.

Yours truly,

GARDINER G. HUBBARD.

From the Rev. Frank M. Ellis, D. D., Baltimore, Md.

BALTIMORE, May 4, 1889.

MY DEAR BROTHER: * * * The more I think over the "Columbian" conception and prospects, the more am I persuaded that a greater university could be built there [in Washington] with \$5,000,000, for the Baptists, than could be built for them in New York city for \$20,000,000, and the work could be done in one-half the time, which is a vital point. * * *

Yours truly,

F. M. ELLIS.

From the Rev. Dr. H. G. Weston, President of Crozer Theological Seminary.

CHESTER, PA., May 10, 1889.

MY DEAR DOCTOR WELLING: * * * My sympathies and my judgment are entirely with you, and have been from the beginning. Washington possesses advantages for such a university as we ought to have which are not to be secured in any other place. You have the best wishes of the faculty.

Yours most truly,

H. G. WESTON.

From the Rev. J. B. Thomas, D. D., LL.D., of Newton Theological Institution.

NEWTON CENTRE, May 11, 1889.

MY DEAR DOCTOR WELLING: I have received and read, as I had already carefully read in *The Examiner* in briefer form, your statement of the case for a national Baptist University at Washington.

I do not see how an unbiassed mind can for a moment resist the cogency of the reasons presented by you in behalf of such an enterprise.

Two additional circumstances which you might not prudently emphasize in your argument will no doubt occur to many as lending significance to such a movement *there* and *now*. First, that there is little hope of securing actually national coöperation at any other point; and, secondly, that we are by antipodal proclivities the natural standard-bearers of Protestantism.

Chicago is certain to be reinstated as a collegiate institution, and certainly ought to be. But the planet will not get in the way of the sun.

The only criticism I have to suggest is that you are not bold enough in your demands. Not less than two and a half millions ought to be set as the immediate mark to be aimed at. It is true, as you urge, that a university must be a growth; but nature starts not with the molecule, but a cell-germ.

Heartily wishing and hoping for a generous recognition of the claims so admirably set forth in your pamphlet, and a corresponding response, I am,

Yours faithfully,

J. B. THOMAS.

From Prof. G. Brown Goode, Ph D., Asst. Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in charge of the U. S. National Museum.

WASHINGTON, June 1, 1889.

MY DEAR DR. WELLING: I have been very much interested in all that you have written about the establishment of a university in Washington, and I sincerely hope that you will continue to agitate the subject until something shall have been accomplished. Washington is already one of the principal intellectual centres in America. Its progress within the past ten years has been marvellous, especially that made since 1885. This advance is shared in and promoted to such an extent by the country at large that it is quite safe to say that its scope is not local but national.

You have shown conclusively that there are very important educational agencies here in Washington which are capable of great usefulness in connection with the work of a university.

If our active, and by no means small, community of investigators were reinforced by the presence of a large and vigorous university faculty, its productiveness could be greatly increased. Many of those now engaged solely in research could, with advantage to their present work, render service as instructors, and the laboratories, collections, and libraries, public and private, as well as the societies and other institutions in the city, could, indirectly, if not directly, be made tributary to the work of a university.

If this is true of the scientific institutions and workers it will doubtless be found equally true in other departments of the intellectual activity of Washington.

Yours very sincerely,

G. BROWN GOODE.

From the Rev. Dr. Bright, Editor of The Examiner.

NEW YORK, June 2, 1889.

MY DEAR DR. WELLING: * * * You must hold fast to your hope about Columbian University. I cannot believe that all will not turn out according to your view, even though it puts your patience to rather severe tests.

Very sincerely yours,

EDWARD BRIGHT.

NEW YORK, June 6, 1889.

DEAR DR. WELLING: I expect to leave on the 13th by the steamer *State of Nebraska* for Glasgow, to take a vacation of about three months, most of which will be spent in Europe. Before I go I wish to reassure you of my profound interest in the establishment of Columbian University on a better footing at our national Capital. I hope you will find encourage-

ment this summer in your correspondence and in your personal interviews with men of means. Your pamphlet and the article in *The Examiner* have made a very deep impression on many minds, and men frequently say to me that Washington is the place for such an institution. * * *

Yours very truly,

H. L. MOREHOUSE.

It will thus be seen that the Columbian University has, during the last year, greatly widened the constituency which takes an interest in its prosperity. And I can attest that this interest, at once deep and enthusiastic, is felt by men of the clearest light and foremost leading in the whole Baptist denomination. And the interest is not confined to men of that denomination alone, but has extended to friends of liberal learning without distinction of creed. It has been frankly recognized that a great university is pledged by the very conditions of its greatness to be unsectarian in its administration. A seat of learning becomes the glory of the denomination which founds and fosters it precisely in proportion as that seat of learning draws students from all denominations by the attractive power of its faculties and lecture courses, as we see in the case of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton colleges.

As I am required to accompany this report with such recommendations as I may deem appropriate, I beg leave to submit the following :

I respectfully recommend, in view of the facts and testimonies just recited, that vacancies in our Boards of Overseers and Trustees shall be filled only with the gravest deliberation, and with supreme regard to that widening career which awaits our University, as we hope, in the near future.

I respectfully recommend that a special meeting of the corporation be called at such time in November next, or earlier, as may be deemed expedient, for the purpose of considering our "University outlook" in the phase it may assume at that date, after the Board of Management of the Education Society shall have taken action upon the report of the Committee above indicated.

I respectfully recommend that the corporation hold a special meeting in this city in the first week of March next (on such day as may be found most convenient after correspondence with the members of the Board of Overseers), to the end that steps may then be taken in the direction of organizing new courses of instruction under the auspices of the University. Some re-organi-

zation will certainly be necessary in advance of the scholastic year 1890-'91.

The Treasurer's Report shows that the liabilities of the University during the last fiscal year have slightly exceeded its income. This deficit has not resulted from ordinary "running expenses," but from a few items of extraordinary expenditure and from the interest cost of the debt incurred by the corporation in building the new University edifice. Yet similar deficits are liable to recur, on the present basis of our operations, and accordingly I respectfully recommend that, in the absence of moneys specifically raised for the purpose of meeting any contingent or ascertained deficit arising during the next fiscal year, such contingent or ascertained deficit shall be met by a reduction of salaries, at such uniform rates as the Board of Trustees, at the middle or close of the next fiscal year, shall find to be just and equitable.

I respectfully recommend that a history of the University be prepared for publication by the U. S. Department of Education, and that \$100 be hereby appropriated for the compilation of the manuscript.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES C. WELLING,
President.

THE COLUMBIAN UNIVERSITY,
June 12, 1889.